

Eight high-tech sectors to share £10m

Lord Sainsbury has announced £100m funding for the high-tech sector as part of the next round of the UK government's technology programme, which has £320m to distribute to UK companies by 2008. The competition opens on 25 April; 2005 applications must be submitted before 13 June, 2005.

The latest round is available for firms to take blueprint products to saleable prototype, with stopping climate change

and creating new technologies for the auto and aero industries as high on the list.

The eight areas of the technology are:-

- the development of new materials bound for tough environments;
- 'direct writing', where materials can be put directly onto complex structures;
- biopharmaceutical processing;

- next generation laser technology;
- emerging energy technologies;
- pollution-free businesses;
- validation of complex systems;
- micro and nanotechnology.

Contact: www.dti.gov.uk/technologyprogramme/open_comps.html

Optelecom buys NKF Electronics

Optelecom Inc has acquired NKF Electronics BV a wholly owned subsidiary of Draka Holding NV establishing Optelecom as a global producer of fiber optic-based communications solutions for video surveillance, traffic monitoring, and business video systems. The purchase price for the acquisition is €20m (\$26.4m), which consisted of a cash payment of €11m and a 6% subordinated note issued by Optelecom to Draka Holding N.V. in the principal amount of €9m (\$11.9m) maturing in 2010.

Edmund Ludwig, Optelecom's president and CEO said "We join two strong product lines and two sales units with little geographic overlap, and bring to market industry-leading, advanced communication solutions for mission critical video surveillance, intelligent transportation, and business video systems. By combining R&D, service and other resources, we believe we can deliver excellent quality products to our customers at great values."

The Optelecom-NKF combination creates a worldwide company of 150 people with increased financial resources to support global government and commercial end-users.

Mimix expands in Taiwan

Houston-based Mimix Broadband Inc has acquired a majority stake in Hocom Communications Inc, an inspection and packing operation based in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Mimix purchased its stake from Clarksburg, Md. Amcom Communications, according to Julie Teinert, marketing VP for Mimix.

The transaction adds three employees to Mimix's staff of 45, divided between offices in Houston and Sydney, Australia. As part of the deal, Mimix

acquires access to nearly 8,000sq.ft of production floor space in Hsinchu Science-based Industrial Park, close to Mimix's wafer fabrication and other product partners helping to improve cycle time, simplify logistics and expedite customer deliveries, said Montgomery.

Kit Yong, Mimix's VP of business development, will serve as Hocom's chairman. Additional Hocom board members include: Dr Charles Lee, a Mimix board member;

Montgomery; and Carl Frampton, Mimix's CFO.

Founded in 2000, Mimix is a semiconductor company specialising in wireless communications. The firm designs circuits for microwave and millimeter-wave wireless communications applications, such as cellular phone transmissions, certain broadband access and satellite communications.

It has raised \$18m and is planning to expand its production activities in Taiwan.

Skyworks to overtake RFMD?

New research from Strategy Analytics shows that Skyworks caught up to RF Micro Devices in 2004, with both suppliers leading the GaAs device market. Skyworks' GaAs device revenues grew by 31%, gaining them a fifth of the world's GaAs device share.

This report, "All Change at the Top as Skyworks Topples RF Micro Devices," indicates 9% growth in the GaAs device market (merchant and captive) — incorporating MMIC,

discrete and digital ICs — from 2003 to 2004. Skyworks increased its share of the worldwide market from 17 % to 20 %, to share RF Micro Devices' lead in the market.

"GaAs device demand from the cellular handset market grew by 20 % in 2004. In sharp contrast to RF Micro Devices, Skyworks was able to outpace this demand and win market share," notes Asif Anwar, director of the Strategy Analytics GaAs and compound

semiconductor technologies service.

"The challenge now for both companies will be to ride out slower growth in cellular handset sales in 2005 and 2006, and to develop new products for new markets if there is to be a clear winner in the marketplace."

Chris Taylor, Strategy Analytics director, observed, "Multiple capabilities are central to these changes in market share.

Skyworks has a distinct advantage over its counterpart with extensive expertise in modules and digital, RF and mixed signal silicon, brought over from Conexant.

"RF Micro Devices, on the other hand, has had to build up this expertise in line with market demands and, in many cases, rely on external foundry relationships to source key process technologies, like pHEMT for switches."